



Law Enforcement Center



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Law Enforcement Center – Need

Q. How and when did the Town decide we need a new Law Enforcement Center?

A. The Town of Bluffton's Comprehensive Plan prepared with the help of community and stakeholder input back in 2007 identified the need for "reliable public safety and emergency services" and "access to sufficient equipment, training and facilities" in its section on Community Facilities (Chapter 7). The stated goal was to "obtain CALEA Accreditation of the Bluffton Police Department" and the first implementation step was to "establish a new Police Department Headquarters."

Q. What is CALEA and how does it impact the need for a new Law Enforcement Center?

A. CALEA is the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (www.calea.org), and this organization works to "improve the delivery of public safety services" through its programs related to accreditation and professional development. The Bluffton Police Department (BPD) recently received national accreditation from CALEA in recognition of its efforts in areas such as operations, preparedness, accountability, risk management, and professionalism. Although BPD received unanimous support from the Commission, a key action item required by CALEA for the BPD to maintain this accreditation was for the Town to upgrade the police facilities as needed for a professional operation.

Q. Isn't the existing facility suitable for law enforcement work?

A. The Bluffton Police Department currently occupies rented space totaling over 6,000 square feet. The Department has outgrown this facility and has identified an immediate need for 5,000 square feet of additional space in the coming year. In addition, the current space is not only inadequate but it is improperly configured for the identified needs of the department. The new facility will immediately give the department the correct amount of space needed and space for growth for over 10 years. In the meantime, the additional space will be occupied by other Town departments saving the need for added rent.



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Law Enforcement Center – Design

Q. How did the design process start?

A. After the Comprehensive Plan identified the need in 2007, the Town started conceptual phase work on the project under its Capital Improvement Program (CIP) in 2008. The first steps involved getting internal and external stakeholders and experts together to identify program requirements, space planning, and design considerations. A conceptual phase consultant was brought in to refine the programmatic assumptions and prepare a conceptual floor plan and related documents.

Q. What were the main design considerations?

A. While there were multiple design considerations identified during the process, some of the most important ones included the following:

- Meet the needs of the law enforcement team
 - Current needs
 - Projected needs – 10 years
 - Consider expansion options
- No gym since that can be outsourced
- Holding cells – maximum 6-hour stay
- Lowcountry vernacular for architectural design
- Sustainability and environmental protection

Q. Who did the actual design work?

A. The design-build team was led by Choate, and the key design consultants were:

- LS3P – Architecture
- McClaren, Wilson & Lawrie – Law Enforcement Experts
- Thomas & Hutton - Engineering

Q. What's included in the final design?

A. The Law Enforcement Center building is approximately 19,618 square feet with a main structure, a sally port for secure transport of prisoners and evidence, and an evidence & lab area. The building façade is made up primarily of brick, and it also has wide windows with metal overhangs and a standing-seam metal roof. The design is intended to be compatible with the Buckwalter Place architectural styles, including the design of the existing brick CareCore building at the opposite end of CareCore Drive. Also, the design included civil engineering work and a site plan that provides roads and utilities not just for this building but also for two future building sites and parking areas on Town-owned land adjacent to the Law Enforcement Center.



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Law Enforcement Center – Construction

Q. Who is building the Law Enforcement Center?

A. Choate Construction is the design-build team leader.

Q. Are local subcontractors or suppliers working on this construction project?

A. Yes. Choate and the Town worked together over the last three months to promote the incorporation of local content into the construction of this facility, and these outreach efforts included activities such as a Contractor Fair at Town Hall, letters mailed to local contractors and suppliers, newspaper advertisements, direct contacts, and more. Pending final negotiations between Choate and its subcontractors, the percentage of the construction work awarded to local firms within 30 miles of the Town should be 80%.

Q. How long will construction take?

A. The schedule is approximately 12 months from the start of construction to substantial completion. We are also planning a commissioning period of approximately 30-45 days to get systems tested and approved by the appropriate authorities, including the operation of holding cells and security systems.

Q. How much is the total project going to cost?

A. The budget is \$6.3 million and the breakdown is as follows:

Direct Construction Costs (Building <u>and</u> Site Infrastructure):	4,420,605
Off-Site Construction Costs (Shared):	96,290
Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (FF&E):	578,945
Design, Testing & Soft Costs:	875,902
Prior Conceptual Phase & Other Costs:	100,000
County Impact Fees, State/Other Fees, Special Inspections:	<u>225,000</u>
Total	6,296,742

Q. How is the Town paying for this project?

A. The Town of Bluffton has issued General Obligation (GO) Bonds in accordance with the revised CIP budget. The Town's Finance Department analyzed different financing methods (e.g., lease versus purchase, design-build-lease, etc.), and it was determined that GO Bonds and related bonds were most advantageous due to currently low interest rates. Because the Town currently rents space for the police department and other Town staff, the savings on rent will help to offset the cost of the bonds.



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Groundbreaking Ceremony



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Aerial View

